Lesson Eleven: The Active Participle
[اِسْم اَلْفَاعِل]

Most Arabic words are derived from three base letters that join together to establish a meaning. Placing these letters on various patterns produces different, but related words. *Lessons Eleven* through *Fifteen* cover several commonly encountered noun forms.

PRINCIPLE ONE

The *active participle* (**اِسْم اَلْفَاعِل**) refers to a person who does the action described by the base letters. For example, the letters **ف–ع–ل** mean, "to do" and its active participle **فَاعِل** refers to "one who does."

PRINCIPLE TWO

The *active participle* has both masculine and feminine forms.[29] Placing the three base letters on the pattern **فَاعِل** produces the masculine form of the *active participle*. For example, replacing the *fā'* (**ف**), *'ain* (**ع**), and *lām* (**ل**) positions in this pattern with **ع–ب–د** (*to worship*) creates **عَابِد** (*a male who worships*) [*figure 11.1*].

PRINCIPLE THREE

The feminine form of the *active participle* is constructed by placing the base letters on the pattern of **فَاعِلَة**. Thus, **ع–ب–د** (*to worship*) becomes **عَابِدَة** (*a female who worships*).

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[29] All Arabic nouns, both living and non-living, are classified as either masculine or feminine. For example, the word **شَمْس** (*sun*) is feminine while the word **كِتَاب** (*book*) is masculine. The masculine form is used to refer to *male beings* or *masculine objects*. The feminine form is used to refer to *female beings* or *feminine objects*.

فَاعِل

MASCULINE *ACTIVE PARTICIPLE*

↓ *Step One: Separate the letters of the model*

فَ ا عِ ل

↓ *Step Two: Replace the base letters* (ف–ع–ل) *with corresponding new letters* (ع–ب–د)

عَ ا بِ د

↓ *Step Three: Reattach the letters of the word to form the masculine active participle*

عَابِد

A MALE WHO WORSHIPS *or* A WORSHIPER

FIGURE 11.1

FORMING THE MASCULINE *ACTIVE PARTICIPLE*

PRINCIPLE FOUR

Arabic words enter four *grammatical states* (*lesson five*). Of these, nouns enter three[30]: (1) *rafa'* (**رَفْع**), (2) *nasb* (**نَصْب**), and (3) *jarr* (**جَرّ**).

Nouns express these *states* through either (1) changes in voweling on the last letter of the word or (2) changes in lettering at the end of the word.

PRINCIPLE FIVE

Most *singular* Arabic nouns, whether masculine or feminine, express changes in their *grammatical states* through changes in voweling on the last letter of the word. Two *dammah*s (ٌ) indicate the *state* of *rafa'* (**رَفْع**), two *fathah*s (ً) indicate the *state* of *nasb* (**نَصْب**), and two *kasrah*s (ٍ) indicate the *state* of *jarr* (**جَرّ**).[31] This is illustrated in *table 11.3* (the final table of this lesson) for both masculine singular and feminine singular forms of the *active participle*.

PRINCIPLE SIX

Like verbs, Arabic nouns also have a dual form.[32] The dual is produced from the singular by (1) altering the voweling of the last letter and (2) adding a designated ending. This ending reflects the *grammatical state* of the word. If the word is in the *state* of *rafa'* (**رَفْع**) then the suffix " **اْنِ** " is added; whereas if the word is in either the state of *nasb* (**نَصْب**) or *jarr* (**جَرّ**), the ending " **يْنِ** " is added. These endings are used for both the masculine and the feminine as illustrated in *table 11.1*. For example, **عَابِد**

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[30] These grammatical states result from the interactions of nouns with other words in a sentence. For example, if a noun is the subject of the sentence, it takes on the *grammatical state* of *rafa'* (**رَفْع**). The goal of the beginner is to realize that *grammatical states* exist and to memorize their various forms. A discussion of the roles of words in sentences and what causes their *grammatical states* is found in advanced Arabic grammar books.

[31] The presence of a double vowel is known as *tanwīn* (**تَنْوِيْن**).

[32] The dual is used to refer to *two individuals* or *two objects*.

(*a male worshiper*) becomes **عَابِدَانِ** (*two male worshipers*) in the *state* of *rafa'* (**رَفْع**) and **عَابِدَيْنِ** (*two male worshipers*) in the *states* of *nasb* (**نَصْب**) and *jarr* (**جَرّ**). While the feminine, **عَابِدَة** (*a female worshiper*) becomes **عَابِدَتَانِ** (*two female worshipers*) in the *state* of *rafa'* (**رَفْع**) and **عَابِدَتَيْنِ** (*two female worshipers*) in the *states* of *nasb* (**نَصْب**) and *jarr* (**جَرّ**).

PRINCIPLE SEVEN

The plural form of Arabic nouns is produced in two distinct ways: the "broken plural" and the "sound plural." The "broken plural" is formed by (1) "breaking" apart the singular word, (2) inserting or removing letters, and (3) changing voweling. A set pattern for these changes does not exist. Therefore, each broken plural must be individually memorized. For example, the broken plural for the singular **كِتَاب** (*book*) is **كُتُب** (*books*), while the broken plural for the singular **مَسْجِد** (*mosque*) is **مَسَاجِد** (*mosques*). In each case the singular form was separated, letters were inserted or removed, and voweling was changed.

PRINCIPLE EIGHT

The second type of Arabic plural is called the "sound plural," and it is used by the *active participle*.[33] The "sound plural" is formed from the singular by (1) making slight alterations to the last letter of the singular and (2) adding a designated ending. This suffix varies between masculine and feminine forms and reflects the *grammatical state* of the word (*table 11.2*). In the case of the masculine sound plural, if the word is in the *state* of *rafa'* (**رَفْع**), the suffix " **وْنَ** " is added; whereas if the word is in either the *states* of *nasb* (**نَصْب**) or *jarr* (**جَرّ**), the ending " **يْنَ** " is added. For example, **عَابِد** (*a male worshiper*) becomes **عَابِدُوْنَ** (*many male worshipers*) in the *state* of *rafa'* (**رَفْع**) and **عَابِدِيْنَ** (*many male worshipers*) in the *states* of *nasb* (**نَصْب**) and *jarr* (**جَرّ**).

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[33] Some singular words only use the broken plural, others only use the sound plural. Rarely, a singular word will use both the sound and broken plurals. For the most part, *active participle*s use the sound plural.

In the case of the feminine sound plural, if the word is in the *state* of *rafa'* (رَفْع), then the suffix " اْتٌ " is added; whereas if the word is in either *nasb* (نَصْب) or *jarr* (جَرّ), the ending " اْتٍ " is added. For example, عَابِدَة (*a female worshiper*) becomes عَابِدَاتٌ (*many female worshipers*) in the *state* of *rafa'* (رَفْع) and عَابِدَاتٍ (*many female worshipers*) in the *states* of *nasb* (نَصْب) and *jarr* (جَرّ).

ESSENTIAL NOTE

The conjugations of the *active participle* must be memorized (*table 11.3*) before moving to the next lesson.

TABLE 11.1

FORMING THE DUAL

BASE FORM	**FINAL GOAL**	**STEP ONE**		**RESULT**		**ENDING**		**DUAL**
فَاعِلٌ A male doer *Masculine singular in rafa'*	MASCULINE DUAL IN *RAFA'*	Change vowel of the last letter to *fathah*	⇨	فَاعِلَ	+	اْنِ	⇨	فَاعِلاَنِ Two male doers *Masculine dual in rafa'*
فَاعِلاً A male doer *Masculine singular in nasb*	MASCULINE DUAL IN *NASB*	Change vowel of the last letter to *fathah*	⇨	فَاعِلَ	+	يْنِ	⇨	فَاعِلَيْنِ Two male doers *Masculine dual in nasb*
فَاعِلٍ A male doer *Masculine singular in jarr*	MASCULINE DUAL IN *JARR*	Change vowel of the last letter to *fathah*	⇨	فَاعِلَ	+	يْنِ	⇨	فَاعِلَيْنِ Two male doers *Masculine dual in jarr*
فَاعِلَةٌ A female doer *Feminine singular in rafa'*	FEMININE DUAL IN *RAFA'*	Change vowel of the last letter to *fathah*	⇨	فَاعِلَةَ	+	اْنِ	⇨	فَاعِلَتَانِ Two female doers *Feminine dual in rafa'*
فَاعِلَةً A female doer *Feminine singular in nasb*	FEMININE DUAL IN *NASB*	Change vowel of the last letter to *fathah*	⇨	فَاعِلَةَ	+	يْنِ	⇨	فَاعِلَتَيْنِ Two female doers *Feminine dual in nasb*
فَاعِلَةٍ A female doer *Feminine singular in jarr*	FEMININE DUAL IN *JARR*	Change vowel of the last letter to *fathah*	⇨	فَاعِلَةَ	+	يْنِ	⇨	فَاعِلَتَيْنِ Two female doers *Feminine dual in jarr*

TABLE 11.2

FORMING THE SOUND PLURAL

BASE FORM	FINAL GOAL	STEP ONE		RESULT		ENDING		SOUND PLURAL
فَاعِلٌ A male doer *Masculine singular in rafa'*	MASCULINE SOUND PLURAL IN *RAFA'*	Change vowel of the last letter to *dammah*	⇨	فَاعِلُ	+	وْنَ	⇨	فَاعِلُوْنَ Many male doers *Masculine plural in rafa'*
فَاعِلًا A male doer *Masculine singular in nasb*	MASCULINE SOUND PLURAL IN *NASB*	Change vowel of the last letter to *kasrah*	⇨	فَاعِلِ	+	يْنَ	⇨	فَاعِلِيْنَ Many male doers *Masculine plural in nasb*
فَاعِلٍ A male doer *Masculine singular in jarr*	MASCULINE SOUND PLURAL IN *JARR*	Change vowel of the last letter to *kasrah*	⇨	فَاعِلِ	+	يْنَ	⇨	فَاعِلِيْنَ Many male doers *Masculine plural in jarr*
فَاعِلَةٌ A female doer *Feminine singular in rafa'*	FEMININE SOUND PLURAL IN *RAFA'*	Drop final *ta' marbutah*	⇨	فَاعِلَ	+	اْتٌ	⇨	فَاعِلَاتٌ Many female doers *Feminine plural in rafa'*
فَاعِلَةً A female doer *Feminine singular in nasb*	FEMININE SOUND PLURAL IN *NASB*	Drop final *ta' marbutah*	⇨	فَاعِلَ	+	اْتٍ	⇨	فَاعِلَاتٍ Many female doers *Feminine plural in nasb*
فَاعِلَةٍ A female doer *Feminine singular in jarr*	FEMININE SOUND PLURAL IN *JARR*	Drop final *ta' marbutah*	⇨	فَاعِلَ	+	اْتٍ	⇨	فَاعِلَاتٍ Many female doers *Feminine plural in jarr*

TABLE 11.3

THE *ACTIVE PARTICIPLE*

FEMININE			MASCULINE			
SOUND PLURAL	DUAL	SINGLE	SOUND PLURAL	DUAL	SINGLE	
فَاعِلاَتٌ female doers	فَاعِلَتَانِ two female doers	فَاعِلَةٌ a female doer	فَاعِلُوْنَ male doers	فَاعِلاَنِ two male doers	فَاعِلٌ a male doer	رَفْع
فَاعِلاَتٍ female doers	فَاعِلَتَيْنِ two female doers	فَاعِلَةً a female doer	فَاعِلِيْنَ male doers	فَاعِلَيْنِ two male doers	فَاعِلاً a male doer	نَصْب
فَاعِلاَتٍ female doers	فَاعِلَتَيْنِ two female doers	فَاعِلَةٍ a female doer	فَاعِلِيْنَ male doers	فَاعِلَيْنِ two male doers	فَاعِلٍ a male doer	جَرّ